



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

FROM: Thanh H. Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: September 4, 2009

RE: Transportation Safety Commission Minutes for September 2, 2009

The Transportation Safety Commission met on Tuesday September 2, 2009 at the Department of Planning & Community Development, 409 S Main Street.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (chair), Doug Stader (DMV), Lee Eschelmann (JMU), Drew Williams (Public Works), Reggie Smith (Public Transit), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Colin Ferrell (citizen)

Guests Present include: Brad Reed (Public Works), Shawn Adams (Public Works), Diane Roll (Police)

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

Old Business

1. Pole Mounted Radar Speed Display

Ms. Dang stated that she had called Fairfax Co, VDOT's Northern VA office, and Purcellville to inquire about their experience with Pole Mounted Radar Speed Displays. Fairfax Co and VDOT have not installed them and she had not heard back from Pucellville. Commission members suggest that she also try to call Vienna to inquire.

Ms. Dang expressed concerns with permanent pole mounted radar speed display and suggested that if the city decides to install them that guidelines for selecting locations should be developed. This would help address requests on streets such as smaller residential streets or large arterial streets where radar speed displays are not appropriate. Research of other non-Virginia localities revealed guidelines that took the following into consideration: 85th percentile travel speeds, average daily traffic, street conditions, locations of parks and schools, correctable accident history, etc. There was discussion amongst Commission members that these permanent pole mounted radar speed displays would be effective on streets like Maryland Ave where Keister Elementary School is located.

On behalf of the HPD, Ms. Dang shared that the Police Department won a portable radar speed display at the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Conference. It is about 15 lbs (much more portable than existing speed trailers), will mount onto existing speed signs, and will also collect data. Mr. Adams wished it to be noted that when HPD installs the portable signs that they mount the signs 7 feet above any sidewalk; Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guideline.

Ms. Dang will continue to explore permanent pole mounted radar speed displays and report back to the Commission. Commission members agreed that the portable pole mounted radar speed displays have a lot of good potential to slow down traffic on multiple city streets.

2. Country Club Court

Following last month's discussion about traffic on Country Club Court, there was discussion and questions: What would be the benefit of changing the stop signs to stop traffic on the cross street if the problem is that motorists are not stopping at the signs already required by law? There was discussion about a 3-way stop at the intersection. Ms. Dang noted that both streets, both referred to as Country Club Ct, are a public street belonging to the city.

Ms. Roles noted that she had received the original complaint/concern from the homeowners association of Country Club Ct. She noted that there were concerns about children playing in the street and their safety around motor vehicle traffic. Ms. Dang noted that children should not be playing in the street and there was discussion about Watch for Children signs. Ms. Roles noted that the Police Department does enforcement in this area occasionally.

The Commission recognized that there is no cut through traffic through this neighborhood (there is no other way out), and therefore violators who are not stopping at stop signs or who are speeding are those living in the neighborhood. The Commission also noted that an additional stop sign would not change speeding behaviors. The Commission encourages the homeowners association to talk with or send newsletters to residents expressing their concerns.

3. Franklin & Ott St

Ms. Dang updated the Commission that traffic counts in this area will be conducted later this month and once the data has been analyzed, it will be presented to the Commission. Public Works delayed traffic counts to include returning university students driving in the area.

Mr. Blessing noted that he would be interested in traffic counts when school is not in session to help assess what percentage of traffic are university students. He suggested that educating students separately might be useful.

4. Kelly St

Speed radar will be implemented by Harrisonburg Police soon.

5. N Main St & Rock St

Ms. Dang noted that Public Works staff is still reviewing options. Options include 1) making Rock St one way, westbound. However, there is concern about pushing all of the traffic on Rock St to the Rock St, Liberty St, and Noll Dr intersection, which can be confusing. With the addition of traffic anticipated at the Sancar building and the Collonades, this may need to be reviewed after those buildings have been fully occupied. 2) Bumping out the curb and gutter at the intersection of Rock St and N Main St so that vehicles traveling eastbound can pull out an additional foot or two and have increased sight distance. There are some possible challenges here, including stormwater/water flow on the street that needs to be further evaluated.

Mr. Williams noted that the city needs to be careful not to set a precedent to making big changes for sight distance issues as there are many locations with issues.

Ms. Dang noted that Public Works is working with the Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority on trimming vegetation on Main St.

Public Works staff will report back to the Commission at a later time on long term options.

6. Grace St & High St Intersection

Mr. Eschelmann updated the Commission, noting that his survey work to evaluate students/pedestrians crossing at this intersection has been postponed due to the utility work occurring on Grace St.

7. South Main St & Country Club Rd Railroad Crossings

Mr. Blessing inquired whether anyone has received feedback on the railroad crossing work. Ms. Dang noted that Public Works has not received comments from citizens. However, the work at the railroad crossing is not yet completed. Public Works staff will be painting white lines within the next few weeks and installing signage to direct bicyclist to use the safer crossing.

8. Willow Hills Dr.

Ms. Roles noted that there was someone in the neighborhood who was interested in "Watch for Children" signs. Ms. Dang will send Ms. Roles a copy of the city's "Watch for Children" signs policy.

9. Announcements

Mr. Williams provided updates to the Commission on the following projects:

- Erickson Ave-Stone Spring Road Phase 2 – This phase will include improvements to Stone Spring Road between S Main St and east city limits and go to bid this Fall 2009. It is a \$25 million project in partnership with VDOT/FHWA, who will be funding the bridge construction over I-81.
- Erickson Ave-Stone Spring Road/Southeast Connector (“Southeast Connector”) TIGER Grant – TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) is a Recovery Act program overseen by the US DOT. The City, Rockingham County, and private developers along the corridor are partnering to apply for \$70.1 million dollars to fully fund the construction of the Southeast Connector between west city limits and Route 33 east of Boyers Road in Rockingham County. The entire project, including right-of-way acquisition and engineering design is estimated to cost \$99 million. Grant applications are due September 15 and notification of award is expected in February 2010.

Commission members made a motion to support a letter of support for this project and grant application to be written by Ms. Blessing on behalf of the Transportation Safety Commission.

- Port Republic Road Phase 3 from Neff Ave to east city limits is near completion. City forces are installing signage and painting lines.
- Port Republic Road in Rockingham County will extend from city limits to the location of the new Rockingham Memorial Hospital campus. This project, overseen by the Virginia Department of Transportation, will go to bid this Fall 2009.

Mr. Stader announced that the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles received a grant for selective enforcement of DUIs.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10am.

NEXT MEETING TUESDAY October 6, 2009 AT 8:30AM at Community Development Classroom, 409 S Main Street.